

Overview: Florida Water Conservation Initiative

June 1, 2001

The state's February 27 Drought Action Plan called for creation of statewide water conservation "committee" as a mid-term action to increase water use efficiency. It has been decided that the Department of Environmental Protection will lead directly a statewide water conservation initiative (rather than form a "committee"). The goal remains the same: using less water to achieve the same beneficial purposes.

This initiative is not intended to address the need for short-term water use restrictions (such as the current water shortage orders of the water management districts) but instead point the way to achieving additional permanent water use efficiencies in all water use categories in Florida. The department recognizes that there is a very broad base of parties interested and informed about water conservation and hopes to benefit from their participation and assistance. Interested parties will be asked to participate in one or more of six Work Groups:

- Agriculture
- Non-Agricultural Irrigation
- Indoor Water Use & Water Features
- Industrial/ Commercial /Institutional
- Water Pricing to Promote Efficiency
- Water Reuse

This is an open process where DEP will facilitate meetings and prepare the final report, but participation will be open to everyone. Participation in work groups by water users, local governments, and other agencies is especially encouraged. Public workshops on June 29 and in August will help focus the work groups toward making written recommendations to the department by October 1.

The department, with the assistance of the water management districts, will produce a draft report on November 1 and a final report on February 1, 2002. The report will:

- Evaluate the current status and effectiveness of the water conservation programs of the water management districts, water utilities, local governments, and water users generally.
- Identify barriers to achieving additional water use efficiency and make specific recommendations on implementing additional efficiency measures, such as amendments to laws, rules, codes, or ordinances; improved pricing practices; financial incentives; additional research; increased reuse of reclaimed water; and education.